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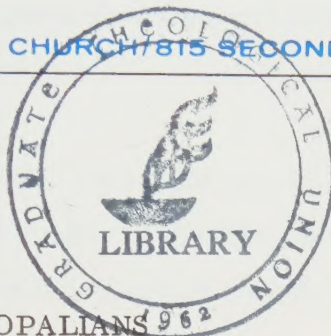
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EXECUTIVE COUNCIL / THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH / 815 SECOND AVENUE / NEW YORK, N.Y. 10017

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October 25, 1979

RUSSIAN ORTHODOX, EPISCOPALIANS DISCUSS CHURCH'S MISSION

NEW YORK -- Delegations from the Episcopal Church and the Russian Orthodox Church found in recent theological discussions a "common understanding of the mission of the Church" as proclamation, praise and service.

Theological discussions between the nine-member Episcopal Church group and the seven-member Russian Orthodox delegation took place Oct. 15-18 at Seabury House, Greenwich, Conn. The general theme for the consultation was "Common Mission of Churches in the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A."

In a joint communique issued at the close of the discussions, the two groups said they had "found a common understanding of the mission of the Church as the proclamation of the Gospel through preaching and sacraments, in the praise of God, and in service to the world."

Both delegations placed special emphasis on "the importance of witness to Christ not only by preaching in words but also by deeds, by the example of Christian life according to the Gospel of the Lord."

A number of papers were presented during the 12 working sessions by members of the two delegations, all designed "to illuminate the mission of the Church in its various aspects."

Some of the papers dealt with the history of the relations between the two churches and the mission of the Church in the New Testament and Patristic writings. Other papers dealt with practical subjects as they related to one or both of the Churches, such as religious freedom, social and economic rights, civil and political rights, and justice and peace in the world.

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In the discussions on religious freedom, the communique said, this issue was considered to mean "free proclamation, praise, and free exercise of Christian activity," as the Gospel says.

The delegation from the U.S. Episcopal Church, the communique said, "was pleased to learn of the increased vitality of the Christian Churches in the Soviet Union, and also to hear reports of a process of increased democratization since the signing of the Helsinki agreement."

The U.S.S.R. delegation "was impressed by the reports of the role of the Episcopal Church in the United States and its concern for such issues as poverty, medical care, and education," the statement said.

On the issues of peace and justice in the world in the context of the Church's mission, the leaders from the two communions agreed "that the Churches should support specific steps toward disarmament, and urge the governments of their nations to ratify the SALT II treaty." They also supported an agreed statement "that further initiatives should be taken which will lead to reduction in numbers of troops and military equipment throughout the world."

The two delegations agreed that future dialogues would be in order. "Although the actual practice of mission understandably varies in our different geographical and socio-cultural contexts," the communique said, "there was consensus that our basic agreement so far reached could provide the basis for future dialogues."

The statement noted that "the friendly atmosphere and personal warmth of our meetings greatly encouraged us all."

In a personal message to Presiding Bishop John M. Allin of the Episcopal Church and to Metropolitan Sergius of Odessa and Cherson, and to the members of the delegations of the two Churches, Patriarch Pimen of Moscow said, "I am sure that the present conference will help to assure greater strengthening of our brotherly cooperation, and the development of the Orthodox-Anglican dialogue for the benefit of justice and peace in the whole world."

Presiding Bishop Allin, who attended the session the last evening the two groups were together, addressed a greeting to Patriarch Pimen and Metropolitan Juvenaly of Krutitsy and Kolomna, in which he said, "Certainly there is overwhelming evidence of the need on this earth for the mission of love, justice and peace of our Lord Jesus Christ. The separating sins which plague all humankind can only be met by a growing community of Christian faithful, responding to the vocation of giving self to Christ in sharing the Christ life with the poor, deprived and desperate people of this world."

This consultation, the communique pointed out, is the continuation of previous meetings, especially the visit and dialogue in July, 1977, when Presiding Bishop Allin and an Episcopal Church delegation visited Moscow.

Following the Seabury House consultation, the delegation from the U.S.S.R. visited several Episcopal Church centers in New York City, including General Theological Seminary, the Episcopal Church Center, St. Thomas Episcopal Church, St. Nicholas Cathedral, the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, and St. Matthew and St. Timothy Church. They also visited Holy Cross Monastery, West Park, N. Y.

The group also spent a day at the National Council of Churches offices and a day and evening in Cleveland, Ohio, as guests of Bishop John H. Burt of the Episcopal Diocese of Ohio. Bishop Burt is chairman of the Episcopal Church's Standing Commission on Ecumenical Relations.

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PICTURE CAPTIONS

#79312/1 The Rev. John G.B. Andrew, left, rector of St. Thomas Episcopal Church, New York City, extends greetings to Metropolitan Sergius of Odessa and Cherson, who headed a delegation from the Russian Orthodox Church on a recent visit to the Episcopal Church. Theologians from the two Churches engaged in a dialogue on "Christian Mission of Churches in the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A." for four days at Seabury House, Greenwich, Conn. Following the consultation, the Russian Orthodox leaders toured several Episcopal Church centers and worshipped at St. Thomas on Oct. 21. (Photo © Odette Lupis 1979, for one time use in Episcopal Church publications only).

President Nixon, who attended the meeting last week for the

first time together, addressed a group of 150 people at the

University of Kentucky and Indiana, to which he said, "Certainly there is something

different at the end of the road for the nations of the world and people of

the world. The question now is whether all nations can help the

people of the world. The question is whether all nations can help the

people of the world. The question is whether all nations can help the

people of the world.

This committee, the committee formed in the summer of 1977, when President Nixon

announced, regarding the visit and dialogue in July, 1977, when President Nixon

and an Episcopal Church delegation visited Moscow.

Following the meeting between President Nixon and the delegation from the U.S.A.

several Episcopal Church leaders in New York City, including

Presbyterian Moderator, the Episcopal Church, St. Thomas Episcopal Church,

St. Nicholas Cathedral, the Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist, and St. John's

Episcopal Church. They also visited with Cross Community, New York, N.Y.

The group also spent a day at the Kennedy Center of American Affairs and a day

and evening at Lincoln Center, as well as visiting John F. Kennedy

Library of Arts. It was noted as significant that the Episcopal Church's standing relationship

on American religious

1981

PICTURE CAPTION

1981, The Rev. and Mrs. J. Edgar Hoover, Jr., visited in St. Thomas Episcopal Church,

New York City, visiting with the Rev. and Mrs. J. Edgar Hoover, Jr., and the Rev. and Mrs. J. Edgar Hoover, Jr.,

visited a delegation from the Russian Orthodox Church as a special visit to the Episcopal

Church. Theologians from the two Churches engaged in a dialogue on "Christian Mission

of Churches in the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R." for the first time in history.

Episcopal Church. Following the meeting, the Russian Orthodox delegation had a special

several Episcopal Church leaders and members of St. Thomas Episcopal Church, New York, N.Y. (Episcopal)

Church, June 1981, for the first time in Episcopal Church history.

#79312/2 A delegation from the Russian Orthodox Church, headed by Metropolitan Sergius of Odessa and Cherson, spent four days in theological discussions with leaders of the Episcopal Church in mid-October. Here they are seen worshipping at St. Thomas Episcopal Church in New York City, with the Rev. John G.B. Andrew, rector, at the right. (Photo © by Odette Lupis 1979, for one time use in Episcopal Church publications only).

#79312/3 A delegation of Russian Christians were guests at the General Theological Seminary in New York at the conclusion of four days of talks with the Episcopal Church in mid-October. At a reception at the Seminary's faculty lounge, the Very Rev. James Fenhagen, left, explains the lounge's portraits to Metropolitan Sergius of Odessa, right, Head of the Russian delegation. The man in the center is unidentified.

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NOTE: There will be other photographs (of a service at the Episcopal Church Center and a luncheon hosted by Bishop Allin) in next week's mailing.

Attachment: Communique from the Consultation

Russian Orthodox/Episcopal Consultation
October 15 - 18, 1979

COMMUNIQUE

From the 14th to 26th of October, 1979, the delegation of the Russian Orthodox Church and other Christian denominations visited the United States at the invitation of the Presiding Bishop John M. Allin of the Episcopal Church.

Delegation members were Metropolitan Sergius of Odessa and Cherson, Head of the delegation; Archbishop Vladimir of Vladimir and Suzdal, Archpriest Arkady Tyshchuk, Head of the Representation of the Patriarch of Moscow in New York; Archpriest Vasily Stoykov, Professor and Vice-rector of the Leningrad Theological Academy and Seminary; Archpriest Vasily Novinski, Parish Priest of the Cathedral at Vilnius; Priest Yanis Andrievich Vairods, Professor of the Roman Catholic Theological Seminary in Riga; and Elder Minister Mikhael Yokovlevich Zhidkov of the Moscow Baptist Church, and Deputy Chairman of the All United Council of Evangelical Christian Baptists.

The visit was the continuation of previous meetings of representatives of the two churches, particularly the visit and dialogue which took place in July, 1977 when the delegation of the Episcopal Church visited Moscow, headed by the Presiding Bishop Dr. John M. Allin.

Theological conversations took place during the current visit on October 15 - 18 at Seabury House in Greenwich, Connecticut. The delegates of the Episcopal Church were Bishop John H. Burt of Ohio, Chairman of the Commission on Ecumenical Relations, Head of the delegation; Bishop Donald J. Parsons of Quincy, Chairman of the Committee on Eastern Churches of the Commission; Canon John H. Backus of the Diocese of Olympia; Professor Winston F. Crum of the Seabury Western Theological Seminary; Professor William B. Green of the Episcopal Theological Seminary of the Southwest; Fr. William A. Norgren, Ecumenical Office, Episcopal Church Center; Dr. William Weiler, Washington Affairs Office; Professor J. Robert Wright of General Theological Seminary; Professor Harold J. Berman, Harvard Law School.

ORIGINAL ARTICLES

From the 1st to 3rd of October, 1938, the delegates of the American Medical Association met in the Hotel Statler, Washington, D. C., for the annual meeting of the American Medical Association.

The meeting was held in the Statler Hotel, Washington, D. C., and was attended by approximately 1,000 delegates from all over the United States.

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During the meeting a number of papers were presented to illuminate the mission of the Church in its various aspects. There were 12 sessions with papers on the following subjects: The History of Relations Between the Episcopal Church in America and the Russian Orthodox Church, The Mission of the Church in the New Testament and Patristic Writings, The Mission as Understood and Practiced by the Russian Orthodox Church, The Mission of the Churches in the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A. Concerning Religious Freedom, The Mission of the Churches in the U.S.A. Concerning Social and Economic Rights and Civil and Political Rights Domestically, The Mission of the Churches in the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A. Concerning Justice and Peace in the World.

During the discussions we found a common understanding of the mission of the Church as the proclamation of the Gospel through preaching and sacraments, in the praise of God, and in service to the world. Both delegations stressed the importance of witness to Christ not only by preaching in words but also by deeds, by the example of Christian life according to the Gospel of the Lord. "And you, like the lamp, must shed light among your fellows, so that, when they see the good you do, they may give praise to your Father in heaven." (Matt. 5:16)

In the reports and discussions of religious freedom, it was pointed out that study of the issues should begin with what the Gospel says. What is religious freedom? Free proclamation, praise, and free exercise of Christian activity. The Episcopal delegation was pleased to learn of the increased vitality of the Christian Churches in the Soviet Union, and also to hear reports of a process of increased democratization since the signing of the Helsinki agreement.

The Christian delegation from the U.S.S.R. was impressed by the reports of the role of the Episcopal Church in the United States and its concern for such issues as poverty, medical care and education.

Discussing issues of peace and justice in the world, both delegations agreed that a Christian goal is to support the strengthening of peace and mutual understanding among nations. In particular, the discussion led to an agreement that the Churches should support specific steps toward disarmament, and urge the governments of their nations to ratify the SALT II treaty. They also agreed that further initiatives should be taken which will lead to reduction in numbers of troops and military equipment throughout the world.

Although the actual practice of mission understandably varies in our different geographical and socio-cultural contexts, there was consensus that our basic agreement so far reached could provide the basis for future dialogues. Last, but by no means unimportant, the friendly atmosphere and personal warmth of our meetings greatly encouraged us all.

Patriarch Pimen of Moscow, in a message addressed to the Presiding Bishop John M. Allin, Metropolitan Sergius of Odessa and Cherson, and members of the two delegations, said, "I am sure that the present conference will help to assure greater strengthening of our brotherly cooperation, and the development of the Orthodox-Anglican dialogue for the benefit of justice and peace in the whole world."

Presiding Bishop John M. Allin, addressing a greeting to Patriarch Pimen and Metropolitan Juvenaly of Krutitsy and Kolomna, said to the delegations, "Certainly there is overwhelming evidence of the need on this earth for the mission of love, justice and peace of our Lord Jesus Christ. The separating sins which plague all humankind can only be met by a growing community of Christian faithful, responding to the vocation of giving self to Christ in sharing the Christ life with the poor, deprived and desperate people of this world."

After the theological conversations, the delegation from the U.S.S.R. visited several centers of the Episcopal Church. In New York City the visit included the General Theological Seminary, the Episcopal Church Center, St. Thomas Church during the Sunday Eucharist, several other parishes and other places, as well as the National Council of Churches. The delegation visited the Order of the Holy Cross, a monastery of the Episcopal Church near Peekskill, New York. The delegation visited the Diocese of Ohio as the guests of Bishop John H. Burt in Cleveland.

(Signed) Metropolitan Sergius of
Odessa and Cherson

Bishop John H. Burt
of Ohio

